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Ball - Wrongs of Children . 1869.

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THE

WRONGS OF CHILDREN;

OR,

A PRACTICAL

Vindication of Children

FROM THE INJUSTICE

DONE THEM IN EARLY NURTURE AND EDUCATION;

Addressed to

PARENTS, TUTORS, GUARDIANS, AND MASTERS;

AND TO

LEGISLATORS AND GOVERNORS;

SETTING FORTH

THE SOURCE OF MUCH HUMAN MISERY,

AND

POINTING OUT THE REMEDY.

IN A SERIES OF ESSAYS ON EDUCATION,

TO BE PUBLISHED PERIODICALLY.

BY THE REVEREND

ANDREW BELL, D.D: L.L.D.

F.AS.S: F.R.S. ED. Master of Sherburn Hospital, Durham; Canon Residentiary of Hereford; formerly Minister of St. Mary's, and Chaplain of Fort St. George, in the East Indies; and Gratuitous Superintendent of the Military Asylum, established at Madras, in 1789.

"Nunquam autem invenietur, si contenti fuerimus inventis. Præterea, qui alium sequitur, nihil invenit, imo nec quærit. Quid ergo? Non ibo per priorum vestigia! Ego vero utar via veteri: sed si propiorem, planioremque invenero, hanc muniam."

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From old Files

THE original and authentic documents, to which frequent reference will be made in these Essays, are recorded in the following publications :—

1. *Elements of Tuition, Part 1st, the Madras School*, 1813: reprinted from Edition 1797.

2. *Elements of Tuition, Part 2d, the English School*, 1814.

3. *Elements of Tuition, Part 3d, Ludus Literarius, the Classical and Grammar School*, 1815.

4. To which may be added, "*Instructions for conducting Schools, through the Agency of the Scholars themselves.*" 6th Edition, 1817.

The first of these volumes contains the Official Report of the Madras Asylum, under the signature of the Government of Fort St. George; dated 28 June 1796, and originally published in London, 1797; to which are subjoined Documents and Records, illustrative of the progress of the new System of Education, in the School in which it originated, and of its effects in the character, conduct, and fortunes of its pupils.

The second embraces the History of the Madras System of Education, its analysis, and application to English Schools in general: to this [illegible] ne is anne[illegible] a "Sketch of a National [illegible] tra[illegible]n of the [illegible];" originally pu[illegible]

The third is an exposition of the experiment made at Madras, with a view to its introduction into Schools for the higher orders of children, and with particular suggestions for its application to Grammar Schools.

To the fourth is prefixed an historical Introduction on the discovery, progress, and results of the new System of Education.

Davidson, Printer, Old Boswell Court.

THE

WRONGS OF CHILDREN, &c.

INTRODUCTION.

ESSAY 1st.—Prospectus of the Object and End of this Publication.

"Of all the men we meet with, nine parts in ten are what they are, good or bad, useful or not, by their education."

LOCKE.

MORE than two years ago, when I was engaged in a scholastic tour on the Continent, a fellow traveller and myself had each a book in hand. After a while we exchanged books. His was the "Morceaux Choisis Des Caractères De la Bruyère; Ouvrage destiné à l'Education de la Jeunesse; Par. L. Ph. De la Madelaine des Académies de Lyon et Besançon.....Paris, 1808."

In the Preface, the Editor extols, to the skies, the discernment, penetration, and profound knowledge of human nature, which have been so universally attributed to the Author. Having long learned not to place implicit confidence in gene-

rally received opinions, I was eager to proceed to the proof, and to examine for myself his dogmas. In turning over the pages, as my way is, looking out for something which had escaped my observation or recollection, my attention was arrested by a passage, which seemed to me to betray an entire ignorance of the basis of that science, for which he stands so celebrated.

If, however, he had only added the weight of his name to speculative error, it is probable that, with the delivery of the book, his positions would have been obliterated from my memory.

Not so, when, on the subject which I had studied most deeply, I perceived the commonplace errors, in regard to the character of children, repeated in a strain of the bitterest invective, and exaggerated to the highest pitch. When I saw his delineation of infancy, adopted and ratified, as it were, for practical purposes, by its republication in a work destined by the *Commission of Public Instruction in France* for the education of youth, and professing to be a selection of those maxims and characters *only*, which are of general application, and suited to all men and to all ages; the impression made on my mind could not be effaced. His words are these:—

" Les enfans sont hautains, dédaigneux, coleres, envieux, curieux, intéressés, paresseux, volages, timides, intempérans, menteurs, dissi-

mulés ;—ils ne veulent point souffrir de mal, et aiment à en faire."

"Children are haughty, disdainful, choleric, envious, inquisitive, selfish, idle, volatile, fearful, intemperate, liars, dissemblers, would not have ill done them, but love to do ill to others."

Maxims so unqualified, however ancient, however popular, however sanctioned by the literary and philosophic world:—Such maxims, directed against those who are incapable of defending themselves, I feel not only as unmanly and ungenerous, but also as calculated, while unanswered, to uphold, and even to aggravate, all those fatal errors in the System of their Education, which have ever been pregnant with the most baneful consequences to them, to their parents, and to society.

Allegations, so inflated and monstrous, and so contrary to the whole tenour of the experiments which I have made relating to the infant mind, *under due nurture and training*, and to the deductions of that science, to which I have devoted the best part of a long life, impressed me with no favourable opinion of the depth of the author, or of his acquaintance with the human heart, whatever might be his general knowledge of a corrupt world, or of the manners of men. I felt an enthusiastic impulse to vindicate the character of children from aspersions so fallacious and un-

just—an attempt which has only been delayed by perpetual occupation and active duties in their service—added to the consciousness of my inequality to express, in words, and to assert and maintain, with my pen, in any manner suited to the importance of the subject, those interesting and momentous truths, which I had developed and demonstrated by long trial, experiment, and induction.

When I was so far recovered from the sensations and meditations into which I was plunged by the acrimonious language and unwarrantable charges I had read, as to proceed with the rest of the Essay, my indignation was converted into disdain, bordering on contempt. Never had I witnessed the power of early prejudice and long received opinions carried to greater length, than in the contradictory maxims of this *profound observer* of men and manners. One of the next sentences which I read, stands thus:—

" La paresse, l'indolence, et l'oisiveté, vices si naturels aux enfans, disparaissent dans leurs jeux, où ils sont vifs, appliques, exacts, amoreux des regles et de la symétrie, où ils ne pardonnent nulle faute les uns aux autres, et recommencent eux-mêmes plusieurs fois une seule chose qu'ils ont manquée."

" Idleness, indolence, and laziness, vices so natural to children, are not to be seen in them

while they are at play; they are then lively, heedful, exact, lovers of rule and order, never pardon one another the least fault, begin again several times if they have failed but in one thing."

It is to me almost inconceivable, that a man of common understanding, who had no pretension to superior penetration, could copy these adages of *the School*, without pausing to inquire whence so striking a disparity; and without adding even a short apophthegm, that might tend to elucidate and reconcile these opposite "Tenets of his master's book."

To seize the occasion, which he overlooked, and to shew where the error lies, how the truth may be experimentally ascertained, *and where the practical remedy may be found*, is the object of these Essays. However much I lament my own inability to the task, to which I am now pledged, I consider it as a duty incumbent on me, as the author of a discovery which has led to the most momentous results, to throw the truths which I have experimentally demonstrated into the popular form of Essays, that nothing may be wanting, on my part, to draw the public attention to a subject in which the public have so deep an interest.

The magnitude of the object, which is of so universal concernment, will, I hope, serve to atone for any failure, on my part, in the execu-

tion. Even in a pecuniary (the lowliest) point of view, that system will appear of no small value, which enables a master to teach 500 scholars with greater ease than he could 50 on the old system *. An excuse also may be found in the essential difference between these and other Essays on the same subject. Most, if not all, even of those which profess to be practical Essays, have little or nothing in them practical but the name. Ingenious theories, and beautiful compositions, framed in the closets and the imaginations of popular authors, seldom make any material addition to our knowledge of the mental faculties, to the stock of scholastic facts, or to the art of elementary tuition.

* To illustrate this point, let us suppose an empire, in which 2,000,000 scholars are to be taught, and that the fees and emoluments of the schoolmasters were, at an average, £50 a-year each. Under the old system, requiring 40,000 masters, the amount at £50 would be £2,000,000; under the new, requiring 4,000 masters, at £50, it would be £200,000. The saving is £1,800,000 annually. This is exclusive of the superior progress and the cheapness of elementary books on the new system. Extend this calculation to all the regions of the earth, and the immense advantage, under the head of economy, will be felt. But what is this to the feelings excited by the consideration of the incalculable benefits, which, in a moral point of view, the new system is fitted to diffuse, as an universal as well as cheap engine for the conversion and melioration of the nations, which yet sit in darkness and the shadow of light!

The present Essays stand on far other ground. They rest their claim on the simple discovery of a *new Organ*, or *intellectual Power*, which had escaped the research of every age and of every country — on a System of Education built on this discovery — and on facts unfolded and established by the uniform experience of thirty years, spent in the application of this power to the infant mind. So different from the Utopian schemes of ancient and modern writers, is the basis of the present Essays, that no doctrines will be here inculcated but what are not only practicable, but have actually been reduced to practice, with unexampled success and effect.

If, then, I shall be able to shew, by incontrovertible facts, and by natural reason, as well as by revealed religion, that the general opinion heretofore entertained of the character of children, when rightly trained in Christian principles, is erroneous, and that the vices commonly imputed to them are greatly owing to these opinions, and to the consequent system of their early nurture and education—a system which fosters and cherishes the original depravity of the human heart.—If I shall be able to demonstrate, that a discovery of a *new Organ* of mind has been made, and measures ingrafted on it for converting those affections and passions which are implanted in the human breast, into instruments, with God's

grace, which we must never cease to implore, for preventing, checking, and correcting (as far as may be), the evil propensities of our fallen nature; and making effectual provision to advance the happiness, as well as to promote the improvement of children in general, beyond all former conception;—surely, if this can be made palpable, by facts and experience, as well as by reason and revelation, the hope may be indulged that parents, at least, will at length be awakened to a sense of the debt due to their own offspring, in the higher as well as lower orders of society, and to avail themselves of a system of instruction and discipline at once mild and gentle, engaging and efficacious.

Perhaps few authors of any moral and intellectual discovery—few founders of any new school, either in ancient or modern times—have lived to witness the same wide diffusion of their tenets, or to count so numerous an host of colleagues, fellow-labourers, co-adjutors, and disciples. Few, at least, have had the same rational ground for indulging the hope, that their discoveries would know no other limits than those of the habitable globe, and contribute, in an equal degree, to the melioration and happiness of the human race.

Still, however, the author thinks nothing done, while any thing remains to be done, to extend

and advance, according to the full power of this new organ of the human mind, the industry, the morals, and the happiness of the people. It is a fact, that there are multitudes of children in the metropolis, and other parts of the kingdom, who are left, notwithstanding the cheapness and the efficacy of Education, on the new system, in ignorance of every moral duty and religious truth, of every virtuous sentiment and good habit, and brought up in idleness, vice, and misery, in a worse condition than that of savage or barbarous tribes.

To these complaints, it is true, the most effectual remedy is more and more extended every day, and, from the rapid progress already made in this good work, the most sanguine expectations may be entertained, that the time is not far distant, when the benevolent wish of the Father of his people will be fulfilled, "And all his subjects enabled to read the Bible."

But if this grand epoch, not very remote, were arrived, the author would ill acquit himself of the task devolved on him, if he were to stop short here. Even in his anxiety for administering to the temporal and spiritual comforts of the poor, he ought to bend his utmost efforts to extend the new System of Education into the higher circle of society. For, after all, on the example and conduct of the great and the rich, must, in no

small degree, depend the manners and behaviour of the poor. How much more, then, if this boon shall be found to shed its benign influence, with peculiar lustre, on the superior ranks of the community.

The real truth is, as has often been advanced in former publications, especially in the *Ludus Literarius*, and has been more and more confirmed by the experience of late years, that the New System of Education is no less appropriate to the higher branches of study, and to the upper classes of society, in every department of literature, art, science, and philosophy, than to the elements of letters, and to the lower orders of children. Indeed its richest fruits are displayed in calling forth the native energy of our ingenious youth—in cultivating early genius and talents in those breasts, where a virtuous and generous emulation, a thirst of knowledge, and love of excellence, are found to predominate.

It is by such means, that it is proposed to rescue our high-spirited and noble youth from the relics of the barbarous and disgusting jargon, and the servile and degrading punishments of the old school, from which the children of the poor are already, in general, exempted; and, from the provoked and mischievous imputations on their characters, handed down from remote antiquity—imputations which have their foundation in ignorance

on our part of their disposition and talents, because no effectual means had hitherto been devised or pursued, for the purpose of submitting to the test of sober investigation and experiment the faculties of the infant mind.

For other evils of old standing, with which this country is still afflicted, the intellectual machinery of the new school also presents a ready remedy. In *prison-houses*, work-houses, and in manufactories, as well as in school-rooms, it has already, whenever duly administered, begun to operate with considerable effect. And, it seems, as if providentially occurring, at this time, to counteract the growing evils of a recent date, arising from the material machinery for the multiplication of power and division of labour in the manufacturing and commercial world, to which it bears so striking a resemblance in its mighty operations, in the multiplication of power and division of labour in the intellectual and moral world, and by which it is calculated (to use the words of the National Society) "to give a new character to society at large." In the government of a School-room, it is not now, as in the government of the commonwealth, a special question whether a lenient code of penal uniformly administered and enforced, is calculated to diminish the number of offences, but it is a practical fact, established by the experience

of thirty years. The latter question is, at length, happily in the hands of those who possess the high and eminent qualifications which the subject requires. In this place, however, and at this time, it may be permitted humbly to remark, that the general principle and practice of the Madras System of moral Government, which are inseperably linked together, bear an intimate analogy to the branch of legislation now on the tapis. Indeed, the laws of nature and of God are universally true and universally applicable. What men have to do, is to apply them to their legitimate objects. If the Government of the State be conducted on principles and laws analogous to those of the new System of Education, its subjects will undergo a similar amelioration to that of the members of a school.

On many former occasions, as well as in a Sermon preached at Lambeth, and published twelve years ago, when speaking of the contemplations arising out of the Madras discovery, it is said, " These vast projects may, to some, appear too high for human aim, and for which the age we live in may not be thought fully ripe;" but

Au[illegible]or has liv[illegible] to witness plans [illegible] for[illegible]
which he not [illegible] projected and [illegible]ute[illegible]
ut also furnished [illegible] practical means of carrying
into general effect, spread far and wide.

But, to return to the present subject.

It were, then, in some measure, to forfeit the labours and the sacrifices of his former life, chiefly devoted to a favourite pursuit.—It were to be wanting to that progressive change, which is observable in the public mind, since the introduction of the new system of education into England, if he did not endeavour to communicate to the children of the great, and the rich, those blessings, which are already widely circulating among their poorer brethren. He would be without excuse, if, with such an engine in his hands, for achieving all he has to propose, as that in the contrivance and application of which, he has been employed abroad and at home, for a period equal to the age of man, he did not persevere in directing its immense powers to the helpless and degraded state of infancy—helpless, by reason of tender years—degraded, by the mental bondage in which it is held. He could not forgive himself, if he did not resort to further and fresh expedients, such as the present Essays, for repeating, inculcating, and following up the conclusions at which he has arrived; first by trial and experiment; then, by an induction of the particular facts which he had investigate and afterwards confirmed, if any confirmati could add to this evidence, by arguments draw from the laws of our common nature, from the

purest principles of humanity, and from the doctrines of our holy religion.

It is impossible to contemplate, without a presentiment of exultation, the glorious career which this country may be expected to run if she be just to herself, and to the discovery which may be said to be all her own, having been made in a British institution in her foreign dominions; and because to her, first of the European nations, was presented this engine, more powerful than has ever yet been wielded by the moralist or divine, by the statesman or politician, by the sovereign or legislature.

In a word, it is by persevering Essays, directed to such ends, by endeavouring to obtain a general promulgation of the truths, which the Author has explored, and to give a right direction and full scope to the mighty machine, which, twenty-two years ago, he brought with him into England, that he will best discharge the duties incumbent on him, as far as every man is accountable for the employment of the talents with which he is intrust[illegible]

The next Essays will be published in April.

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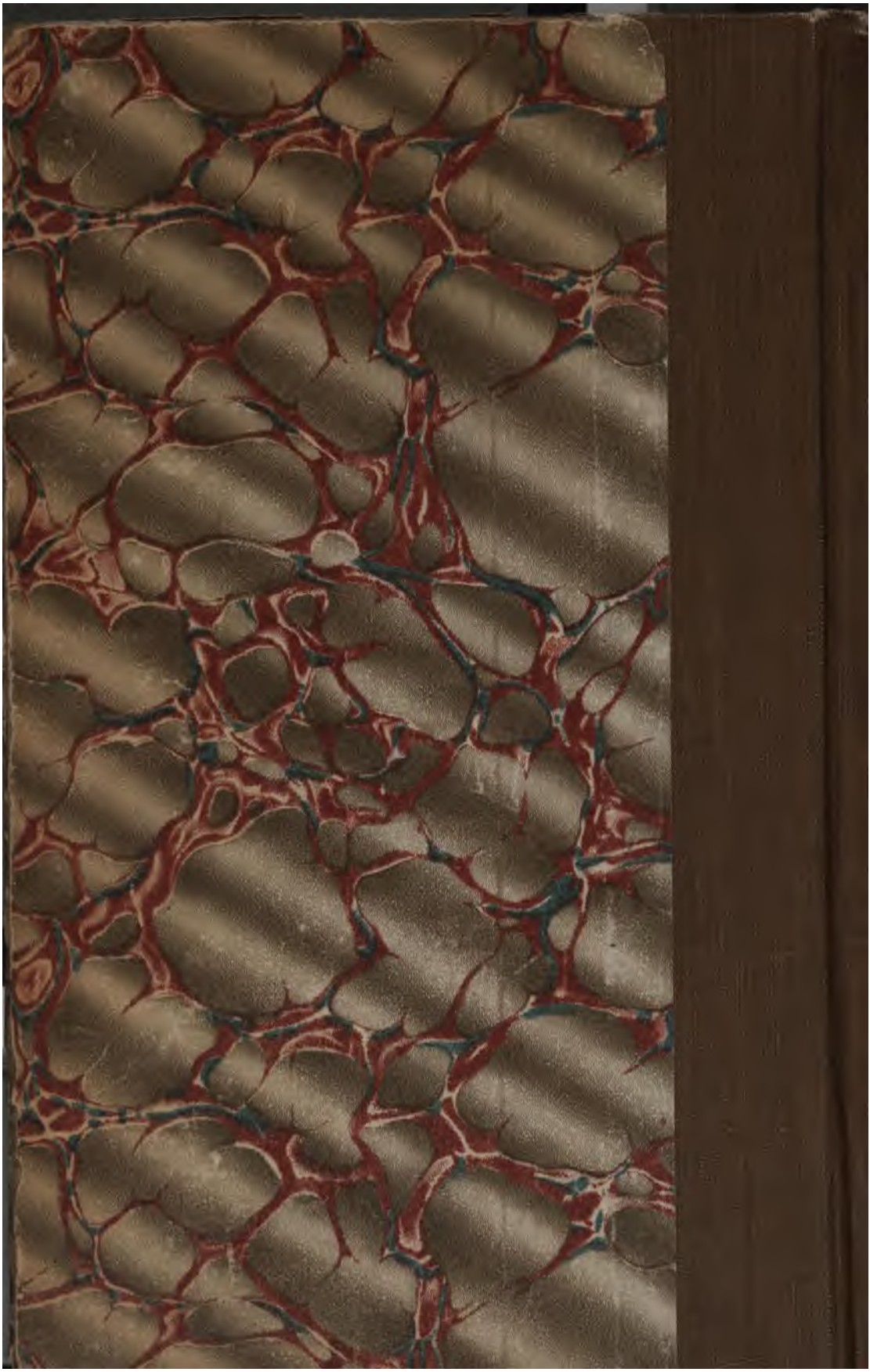
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